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THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING

*... Its role in
providing human
services and how
the proposed tax
package affects
those services*



**The Illinois
Department
on Aging**

James E. Thompson, Governor
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In his March, 1987 Budget Message to the Illinois General Assembly, Governor James R. Thompson proposed a tax package that will enhance economic development and support several human service needs in Illinois. To understand how it affects the Department on Aging specifically, one must first become familiar with the services it provides, as well as the people who receive them.



What the Budget Provides

The Department on Aging's budget request is for \$135.8 million, which is 3 percent larger than last year's spending plan and includes a \$93.1 million request in state General Revenue funds. With these funds, the Department plans to work with Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers to:

- Implement a statewide program to prevent elder abuse. The program, based on a voluntary reporting system, would include assessment, casework, follow-up and supportive services and would assist both the abused and their abusers.
- Expand services for Alzheimer's victims, now estimated at 111,000 in Illinois —and for their families, who are faced with the physical, emotional and financial demands of caregiving.
- Continue expanding one of the largest state-funded in-home care programs in the nation, which provides chore-housekeeping, homemaker and case management services statewide and adult day care in 35 counties. Some 25,000 frail individuals who would otherwise be institutionalized are served through this program.
- Continue providing federal Older Americans Act programs, including meal and transportation programs, case management, information and referral, employment, and a range of other services coordinated by Area Agencies on Aging and offered through senior centers and local aging offices. More than 148,000 seniors participate in meal programs annually, and nearly 400,000 participate in community-based services.

What Would Happen Without Additional Revenues

Without the additional revenues contained in the Governor's budget, this is how the Department on Aging would be affected:

- Efforts to establish a statewide elder abuse intervention program would be dropped.
- Examination of new ways to help Alzheimer's victims and their families would be curtailed.
- The quality assurance efforts to protect Community Care clients would be reduced.
- State funding to enhance federal Older Americans Act programs would be reduced.

The Bottom Line

Demographics tell us that the older population in Illinois will continue to grow — and the needs of the state's 1.8 million individuals 60 and over will continue to increase. In order to continue assisting these older people in maintaining their dignity and independence, increased revenues are needed . . . that's the bottom line.

But the picture is really even broader than this. Failure to come up with additional revenues also means that other key human service programs will suffer — like child welfare and education. Though these programs are not a part of the Illinois Department on Aging, they are programs that promote the health and well being of the children who will someday represent the older generation — and hopefully they will not fall prey to poverty, poor health and closed options for living out their later life.

So maybe the bottom line is really this — our older persons, younger persons and the “sandwich” generation in between benefit substantially by state human service programs operated in cooperation with the private sector — such as in-home care for the elderly and disabled, congregate and home-delivered meals for the elderly, infant mortality reduction, preschool education programs, child abuse protection, elder abuse protection, Circuit Breaker tax relief, public health and teen pregnancy programs, good quality nursing home care and programs that respond to the growing need of Alzheimer’s victims and their families. These are the programs that really affect all of us.

A Plan that Raises Revenues and Achieves Tax Reform

We have reached a point where revenues to the State are not growing quickly enough to supply the same level of services that Illinoisans have come to expect and deserve. In his plan, the Governor proposes to reduce the state sales tax to 4.5% from 5%; to broaden the sales tax to cover certain types of services, computer software, and non-prescription drugs; to increase the personal income tax to 3% from 2.5%; to increase the personal income tax exemption to \$1500 by 1989; and to increase gas tax and license plate fees.

An objective analysis of the Illinois tax system, the services its government provides and its economic health will show that, measured against personal income, Illinois taxpayers pay less than the national average in taxes to state and local government combined. At the same time, the services Illinoisans receive have expanded significantly over the last 10 years.

In fact, 31 other states have a heavier tax burden than Illinois. And the most recent

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figures available show that the state's tax burden is below the average for the 10 largest industrial states and for nine of the Great Lake States.

More tax relief — including the Circuit Breaker, Homestead Exemption and elimination of sales tax on food and medicine — has been granted in the last ten years than in all the years of Illinois history combined, and the Illinois personal income tax is the next to lowest in the nation.

If we do not see our future and recognize that improvements require additional spending, the cost in the future will be much greater.



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